

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amended the claims as shown on the attached sheets.

1. (original) A process for the oxidative purification of an exhaust gas containing oxygen and a combustible component by oxidative reaction in an oxidation reactor, in which the exhaust gas, before being introduced into the oxidation reactor, passes through a high-velocity path in which the flow velocity of the gas passing through is higher than the flashback velocity, which comprises recirculating to the high-velocity path a substream of the flue gas liberated in the oxidative reaction.
2. (original) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the recirculation of flue gas in the high-velocity path establishes a flow velocity which is at least 1.2 times the flashback velocity.
3. (currently amended) A process as claimed in claim 1 ~~claims 1 and 2~~, wherein the flue gases are recirculated to the high-velocity path under control of volumetric flow rate and the flow velocity in the high-velocity path is used as control variable.
4. (currently amended) A process as claimed in claim 1 ~~claims 1 to 3~~, wherein the exhaust gas, upstream of the high-velocity

path, is preheated via a heat exchanger operated by the flue gas waste heat.

5. (currently amended) A process as claimed in claim 1 ~~claims 1 to 4~~, wherein the temperature of the preheated exhaust gas is set in such a manner that the lower explosive limit, at the existing pressure and existing gas composition, is at least $4/3$ times the value of the existing concentration of combustible components.
6. (currently amended) A process as claimed in claim 1 ~~claims 1 to 4~~, characterized in that an exhaust gas is used which originates from a heterogeneously catalyzed gas-phase oxidation and the temperature of the preheated exhaust gas is set in such a manner that it corresponds at maximum to the hottest temperature of the heterogeneously catalyzed gas-phase oxidation.
7. (currently amended) A process as claimed in claim 1 ~~claims 1 to 6~~, wherein the oxidation reactor used is a combustion chamber.

8. (currently amended) A process as claimed in claim 1 ~~claims 1 to 7~~, wherein an exhaust gas is used which originates from the heterogeneously catalyzed gas-phase oxidation of n-butane and/or n-butenes to maleic anhydride, of o-xylene to phthalic anhydride, of propene to acrylic acid, of isobutene to methacrylic acid, of 1,2-ethanediol to glyoxal and/or of ethene to ethylene oxide.
9. (currently amended) An apparatus for the oxidative purification of an exhaust gas containing oxygen and a combustible component according to the process as claimed in claim 1 ~~claims 1 to 8~~ comprising
- a) a feed line (1) for the exhaust gas (I);
 - b) an oxidation reactor (B);
 - c) a high-velocity path (A) which is situated between the feed line (1) and the exhaust-gas side of the oxidation reactor (B);

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- d) a line (5) for recirculating flue gas, which line is situated between the flue-gas side of the oxidation reactor (B) and the exhaust-gas side of the high-velocity path (A); and
- e) a removal line (4) for the flue gas (II).